

\$108 million in new and retained sales
\$29 million in new investments
1,369 jobs created or retained

South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP) is a private, non-profit group that provides South Carolina businesses with a range of innovative strategies and solutions to drive growth, eliminate waste, and develop resources.

An affiliate of the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST), SCMEP operates under the US Dept of Commerce to promote innovation and industrial competitiveness.

The core of SCMEP's business improvement services is the one-day Competitiveness Review, an assessment tool developed by SCMEP. The Competitiveness Review is a comprehensive on-site, systematic evaluation of a company's operations that enables SCMEP's Manufacturing Specialists to:

- Gain an understanding of the organization in order to identify the core issues limiting your success
- Determine which business improvement actions will help you to compete more effectively

In short, SCMEP exists to help small and mid-size companies in South Carolina to compete, grow and win. When companies work with SCMEP they get access to resources that give them the competitive edge!

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* Impacts are based on clients receiving service in FY2009

CLIENT SUCCESS: ULBRICH PRECISION FLAT WIRE

“With SCMEP, Ulbrich has clearly marked a path toward an even greater future. We continue to think of things SCMEP can help us with, from Kaizen training to sustained Lean efforts.”

Ed Treglia, Vice President
Ulbrich Specialty Wire Group

South Carolina MEP Helps Ulbrich Precision Flat Wire Develop Roadmap for Future Success

Ulbrich Precision Flat Wire, located in Westminster, South Carolina is equipped for rolling, drawing, annealing, straightening and precision winding a variety of flat wire products. Ulbrich is on the technical forefront of the metals industry delivering precision products to an increasingly diversified and global marketplace, expanding into the medical, solar energy and electronics industries. The company offers technical support and applications engineers who work directly with customer to determine product needs and specifications based upon customers processes, equipment, and specialized needs. The family-owned firm employs 100 people.

Ulbrich Precision Flat Wire has sought to sustain progress particularly in the long-term. “We’re trying to find applications for wires that are specialized, and find markets early in the lifecycle that have a lot of potential for future growth,” said Ed Treglia, Vice President, Ulbrich Specialty Wire Group. “We want to be able to differentiate ourselves from our competitors, and bring the best value to our customers,” said Treglia. Ulbrich Precision Flat Wire enlisted South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Program (SCMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to develop a strategic vision and plan, helping the division to maintain its elite status.

SCMEP paired Ulbrich with management consultant, Linda Prince, who suggested the visioning program based on the following three fronts: 1) discovery -- the collection of data from employees at all levels, including leaders and associates; 2) feedback - giving the data to the principals; and 3) mission development -- the actual creation of the shared strategy. Essentially, each phase of the project served the same purpose: to help Ulbrich more effectively tackle the marketplace.

SCMEP conducted a Competitiveness Review assessment that recommended organizing the facility into ‘focused factories’ consisting of medical, solar, diversified and steel segments. Ulbrich then engaged SCMEP to help introduce Lean manufacturing techniques and the 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) program to its plant. SCMEP facilitated Lean training for company employees, which helped to eliminate workplace clutter and improve organization. The 5S implementation also enhanced workflow, streamlining processes, particularly in the solar-focused factory, where it was normally necessary.

Results:

- * Increased sales by \$1 million.
- * Retained sales of \$2 million.
- * Realized \$150,000 in cost savings.
- * Invested \$75,000 in workforce development.
- * Created 5 jobs.
- * Retained 10 jobs.

Created 5 new jobs